

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 EURE-00 DHA-02 MCT-01 CIAE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /068 W
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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5461

INFO DIA WASHDC PRIORITY

USCINCEUR PRIORITY

EUDAC STUTTGART GER PRIORITY

AMCONSUL BORDEAUX

AMCONSUL LYON

AMCONSUL MARSEILLE

AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE

AMCONSUL NICE

AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 28434

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, FR

SUBJECT: CONTINUED VIOLENCE IN CORSICA

REF: (A) NICE 442, (B) PARIS 26401

SUMMARY. THE CONFESSED MURDER OF TWO CORSICAN SHEPHERDS BY A DESERTING FOREIGN LEGIONNAIRE HAS RESULTED IN A SPATE OF VIOLENCE IN VARIOUS PARTS OF CORSICA WHERE LEGIONNAIRES ARE STATIONED. WE CAN EXPECT THAT THE VIOLENCE WILL CONTINUE UNTIL GOF TAKES MEASURES TO DEAL WITH THE EVER PRESENT PROBLEM OF FOREIGN LEGION BASES IN CORSICA. THE MORE MILITANT AUTONOMOUS MOVEMENTS NOW HAVE THE SYMPATHY OF THEIR COMPATRIOTS AND COULD WELL TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE CURRENT SITUATION TO PERPETRATE FURTHER ACTS OF VIOLENCE. END SUMMARY.

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1. AS REPORTED REF A, THE SITUATION IN CORSICA CONTIN-

UES TO WORSEN ALMOST BY THE HOUR. SHORTLY BEFORE NOON ON SEPTEMBER 28, LUDWIG WERNER, ONE OF THE TWO DESERTERS ARRESTED FOR SUSPICION IN THE BUSTANICO MURDERS, ADMITTED TO THE CRIME. EARLIER IN THE SAME DAY, THE RESIDENCE OF THE FOREIGN LEGION COMMANDER AT CORTE WAS FIRED UPON BY UNKNOWN ASSAILANTS. THE FUNERAL ON SEPTEMBER 28 OF THE TWO MURDERED SHEPHERDS, THE RUGGIERI BROTHERS, COINCIDES WITH THE TRIAL OF TWO GERMAN LEGIONNAIRES ACCUSED OF KILLING AN OLD WOMAN DURING THE SUMMER OF 1975. THE BOEING AFFAIR IS STILL FRESH IN THE MINDS OF ALL CORSICANS (REF B), BUT UNLIKE THE BOMBING OF THE AIR-PLANE, THE PRESENT MURDERS SEEM TO HAVE CREATED JUST THE TYPE OF SITUATION THAT THE MILITANT AUTONOMOUS MOVEMENT, THE NATIONAL FEDERATION FOR THE LIBERATION OF CORSICA (FNLC), HAS BEEN WAITING FOR.

2. THE FNLC HAS CLAIMED RESPONSIBILITY FOR NEARLY ALL VIOLENT ATTACKS IN CORSICA IN RECENT MONTHS. THE ASSOCIATION OF CORSICAN PATRIOTS (APC) AND THE "FRONTE CORSU", WHICH UNTIL NOW HAVE BEEN FAR MORE MODERATE IN THEIR DEMANDS THAT THE ISLAND BE GRANTED FULLER AUTONOMY, HAVE JOINED FORCES WITH THE FNLC IN CONDEMNING THE "ODIOUS DRAMA" OF BUSTANICO. (THIS CRIME IS BUT THE LATEST IN A LONG AND GRUESOME LIST OF RAPE, ROBBERY AND MURDER IN RECENT YEARS FOR WHICH THAT SECTION OF THE LEGION STATIONED IN CORSICA HAS BECOME INFAMOUS.) ALTHOUGH THE DESERTERS REPRESENT ONLY A SMALL PORTION OF THE 3,000 CORSICAN LEGIONNAIRES (THE LEGION'S DESERTION RATE IS CONSIDERED TO BE ABOUT 4 PERCENT ACCORDING TO FRENCH MILITARY AUTHORITIES, ALTHOUGH THERE ARE THOSE IN CORSICA WHO CLAIM IT RUNS AS HIGH AS 10 PERCENT), THE HARSH DISCIPLINE OF TRAINING AND THE LACK OF AMUSEMENT ON THE ISLAND ARE A SOURCE OF GROWING FRUSTRATION TO MANY OF THE LEGIONNAIRES STATIONED THERE. DESERTERS HAVE IN THE PAST PREYED UPON LOCAL

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USCINCEUR PRIORITY

EUDAC STUTTGART GER PRIORITY

AMCONSUL BORDEAUX

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RESIDENTS IN ORDER TO SUPPORT THEMSELVES, OR TO ESCAPE FROM THE ISLAND. LAST YEAR, ONE DESERTING LEGIONNAIRE WAS CHASED ACROSS THE MOUNTAINS BY A GROUP OF MEN FOR ALLEGEDLY ATTEMPTING TO ROB AN OLD WOMAN AND WAS MURDERED BY THESE MEN AFTER THEY CAUGHT HIM. A FEW YEARS AGO ANOTHER DESERTER OPENED FIRE WITH HIS MACHINE GUN ON A TOURIST-COVERED BEACH AND HAD TO BE CUT DOWN BY HIS OWN COMRADES-IN-ARMS. A COMMON SIGHT AT ALL THE AIRPORTS AND SEAPORTS OF CORSICA IS A PAIR OF FOREIGN LEGION POLICE MAKING SURE THAT NO DESERTER IS ATTEMPTING TO LEAVE BY PUBLIC MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION. (MANY OF THE LEGIONNAIRES ARE SMUGGLED OUT OF CORSICA BY GERMANS OR OTHER COMPATRIOTS IN THE TRUNK COMPARTMENTS OF AUTOMOBILES.) FOR THE MOMENT, THE ENTIRE FOREIGN LEGION IN CORSICA IS CONFINED TO BARRACKS. THIS TIME, HOWEVER, THE
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AUTONOMISTS CAN BE ASSURED OF BENEFITTING FROM THE UNDERSTANDING -- AND EVEN THE SUPPORT -- OF MUCH OF THE ISLAND'S POPULATION, WHO HAVE CONSIDERED THE FOREIGN LEGION FOR SOME TIME A FORM OF OCCUPYING ARMY.

3. THIS IS JUST THE SORT OF SITUATION THAT ON THE VOLATILE ISLAND OF CORSICA COULD EXPLODE INTO MORE VIOLENCE IN THE DAYS TO COME. IT WILL BE REMEMBERED THAT EDMOND SIMEONI IS STILL AT LARGE WITH A GANG OF FOLLOWERS SOMEWHERE ON THE ISLAND AND MAY TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE CURRENT UNREST TO PERPETRATE ANOTHER DRAMATIC INCI-

DENT SUCH AS THE EXPLODING OF A PIED-NOIR'S WINE STOCK
(PARIS 26401). MINISTERS OF THE INTERIOR HAVE ALWAYS
BEEN CONFRONTED WITH A THANKLESS TASK WHEN TRYING TO
DEAL WITH CORSICA, BUT THE FOREIGN LEGION IS AFTER ALL
AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE FRENCH ARMED FORCES, AND SETTING
OFF BOMBS AT THE HOME OF AN ARMY COMMANDER CONSTITUTES
AN ATTACK ON THE STATE. THE GOF WILL BE STRONGLY MOTI-
VATED TO MAINTAIN ORDER WHILE ATTEMPTING TO AVOID DIRECT
CONFRONTATION WITH THE CORSICANS WHICH MIGHT PRECIPITATE
MORE SERIOUS CRISES. POST WILL CONTINUE TO REPORT AS
THE SITUATION WARRANTS.
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